

CHAPTER 22

Wycliffe's Views



INSPIRATION
OF THE BIBLE



UNDERSTANDING
THE BIBLE:

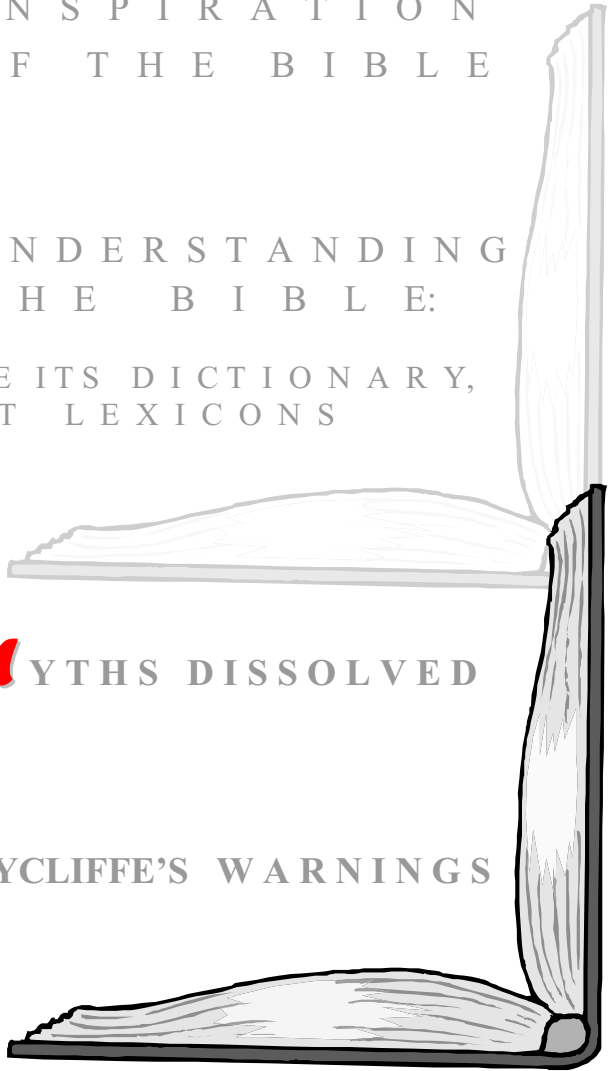
USE ITS DICTIONARY,
NOT LEXICONS



MYTHS DISSOLVED



WYCLIFFE'S WARNINGS

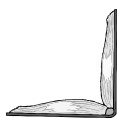


“When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it **not as the word of men, but** as it is in truth, **the word of God...**” 1 Thes. 2:13

According to this verse in Thessalonians, the English Bible is the word **of God**, not the words **of men**, such as the apostle Paul, Wycliffe, Tyndale, or the KJV translators. Wycliffe himself cited this verse and said, “This is the reason why our prophets say: **Thus says the Lord**” (John Wyclif, *On the Truth of Holy Scripture* (1378), translated from the Latin by Ian Christopher Levy, Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, Medieval Institute Publications, 2001, p. 160; to verify his translation examine *several* Latin editions, such as Rudolf Buddensieg, *De veritate sacrae scripturae*, 1905).

“The **words of the LORD**...in a furnace of **earth, purified** seven times” Ps. 12:6

The Lord used ‘earthly’ hands and pens to preserve **his** purified and polished words. Though written with men’s pens, they remain God’s words. One such translator, Richard Rolle (d. c. 1349) wrote,



“Here may we see that none should be so hardy to translate or expound Holy Writ but if he feeled the **Holy Ghost** in him, that is **maker of Holy Writ**, for soon shall he err that is nought led with him” (as cited in G.W.H. Lampe, *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, Cambridge: University Press, 1969, p. 386).

Those who handled the English scriptures believed them to be inspired by the Holy Ghost.

“All **scripture** is **given** by inspiration of God...” 2 Tim. 3:16

John Wycliffe (variously spelled Wyclif etc., c. 1325-1384) believed the English Bible was “scripture,” and therefore from the Holy Ghost’s “inspiration.” God entrusted his word to Wycliffe’s care. He did not entrust the word of God to the care of those who do not esteem it so highly.

*W*ycliffe said,

“*The* clergy cry aloud that it is heresy to speak of the Holy **Scriptures in English**, and so they would condemn the **Holy Ghost**, who gave tongues to the Apostles of Christ to speak the word of God in **all languages** under heaven”

(John Wycliffe, *Speculum Secularium Dominorum, Opera Minora*, London: Wycliffe Society, John Loserth, editor, 1913, p. 74, as cited in Bill Bradley, *Purified Seven Times*, Claysburg, PA: Revival Fires Publishing, 1998, p. 11).

Wycliffe affirmed that the Bible comes, “from the mouth of God” (W. Kenneth Connolly, *The Indestructible Book*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996, p. 74). Bible critics like *Revised Version* committee member, John Eadie admit, “Wycliffe’s

work as a translator brought upon him special hostility, for the idea of an English Bible filled the clergy with alarm and indignation.” Wycliffe knew, as he tells us, that the priests declared it to be ‘heresy to speak of the Holy **scriptures in English.**’ In his book entitled, *Wycket*, Wycliffe said that the scripture is given by the Holy Ghost in all languages. To those who charge that inspiration is lost with translation, Wycliffe says,



“...such a charge is a condemnation of the **Holy Ghost**, who first **gave** the **Scriptures** in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak that word **in all languages** that were ordained under heaven” (John Wycliffe, *Wycket* (a treatise against the Catholic view of the Eucharist), printed in Nuremberg in 1546, by Coverdale in 1548-1550, and again in Oxford in 1612, as cited in John Eadie, *The English Bible: An External and Critical History of the Various English Translations of Scripture*, vol. I, London: MacMillan, 1876, p. 81 et al.).

Even today many say it is “erroneous and heretical” to believe our English Bible is “scripture” and therefore that it is still the very inspired words of God, not the words of men (quotes on file). Addressing the lack of faith of those who say, “God did not do it – men did it,” Wycliffe replies,



“You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy **Scriptures in English.** You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you **blaspheme**? Did not the **Holy Ghost give** the word of God at first in the **mother-tongue of the nations** to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost?” (as cited in David Guy Fountain, *John Wycliffe: The Dawn of the Reformation*, Southampton: Mayflower Christian Books, 1984, pp. 45-47).

God did not abandon his word to a scholar’s bookshelf.

Wycliffe said, “I am astonished, therefore, that some of our own people would slander those who say that they possess the **Holy Spirit speaking** to them in this way” — that is, through the scriptures in English (*Truth*, p. 194).

The *Prologue* to the Wycliffe Bible states that the Holy Ghost preserved the “holy scriptures” (2 Tim. 3:15) free from “error.”

“Therefore a translator...hath need to live a clean life, and be fully devout in prayers, and have not his wit occupied about worldly things, that the **Holy Spirit, author** of wisdom, and cunning, and truth, dress him in his work, and suffer him **not for to error**...By this manner, with good living and great travail, men more come to true and clear translating...God grant to us all grace to know well, and keep well holy writ, and suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last! Amen” (John Wycliffe, *Holy Bible, Prologue*, Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, digitized edition of Forshall and Madden’s 1850 edition, 1997, pp. 59-60).

Wycliffe writes,

“...Holy Scripture is the unique word of God and our authors are only God’s scribes or heralds charged with the duty of inscribing the law he has **dictated** to them...[H]e himself had **dictated** it within the hearts of the humble scribes, stirring them to follow that form of writing and description which he had chosen...God instructed them to speak in this way...And they proclaimed its great authority for that

very reason, and **not** because it was **their own word**...[T]hose who defile the purity of Holy Scripture must be rebuked in no uncertain terms..." (*Truth*, pp. 208, 209, 210, 211, 9, 222 et al.).

In summary, Wycliffe believed "a man's pen" (i.e. Isa. 8:1) wrote God's words, which were preserved by the "Holy Ghost, who gave the Scriptures in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak that word in all languages that were ordained under heaven" (Eadie, p. 81).

*W*ycliffe's now undisputed position as the founder of English prose" arises from those who mistakenly credit *him* with —

"the *beauty* of holiness"

— seen only in the "holy scriptures" (1 Chron. 16:29) (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1910, s.v. Wycliffe, p. 869). Calling him "the master of English prose," as his biographer does, is like crediting the diamond miner and the stone cutter for the sparkle in the polished gem (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912, s.v. Wyclif, p. 462). The Oxford historian, Anthony à Wood, stated that at Canterbury Hall, Wycliffe was Geoffrey Chaucer's teacher. Chaucer wrote *Canterbury Tales*, the work chosen as most exemplary of fine Middle English writing (Benson Bobrick, *Wide as the Waters*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001, p. 29). Chaucer and his teacher Wycliffe were merely *students*, taught by the word of God.

How could a gardener take credit for the scent of a lily, or a man for the beauty in God's word? A gardener's hand, moving only with the strength God gives, may set God's seeds, line by line. Gardener and grammarian can bow on bended knee to see God's word, the "seed...which liveth and abideth for ever," bring forth "life" under heaven's "Sun" (Mal. 4:2, John 6:63, 1 Peter 1:23).

Understanding the Bible: God's Built-in Dictionary



Or Books by Tares with Built-in Errors

Step 1: Pray

Wycliffe wrote that “[I]t is truly a matter of the greatest importance and necessity that the disciples of Holy Scripture **pray** in order that they might understand” (*Truth*, p. 147).

Step 2: Read

Scripture in **all languages** and during **every time period** has been characterized by some seemingly **special** or archaic **vocabulary** and sentence structure. Affirming this, Wycliffe echoes an author from the 300s. They conclude that those who “give attendance to **reading**” will quickly understand the ‘holy’ language of the Bible (1 Tim. 4:13).

“‘Scripture’s form of speaking becomes familiar through the habit of reading and hearing it...’ [T]he forms which seemed at first unrefined and unsuitable, will later appear wise and subtle as one becomes better acquainted with it” (*Truth*, p. 142).

Step 3: Look

“Wycliffe held that **one passage explained another** better than any gloss [interlinear, dictionary or commentary] could” (Bobrick, p. 48). “[I]n his eyes it needed no interpreter because its meaning seemed self-evident” (Roland Bainton, *Horizon History of Christianity*, New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1964, p. 238). Wycliffe felt that ‘The word is not to be opened by means of the grammar used by boys; Scripture has its own rules’ (Schaff-Herzog, s.v. Wyclif, p. 463). The *Prologue* to the Wycliffe Bible (1384) reveals how the

translator found the **Bible's built-in meaning** of a word by studying the words and verses *before* and *after* the word or verse under consideration — just as described in Search 2 in this book's chapter "Every Word."



Prologue: "Therefore a translator hath great need to **study** well the sense, both **before** and **after**, and look, that such **uncertain words** accord with the sense..." (John Wycliffe, *The Holy Bible, Prologue*, p. 60).

Wycliffe adds,

"In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another" (as cited in Fountain, p. 48).



Prologue: The introduction to the Wycliffe Bible describes the 'dictionaries in the mind' which modern linguists have just discovered. Wycliffe used Search 1, as described in this book in the chapter, "Every Word." He agreed, saying the Bible's definition of a word is created in the mind as words are read in the context. It is then recalled automatically as they are repeated.

"[E]ach sense may be proved by the **other places** of holy scripture for to accord to truth; for without doubt the Spirit of God, that spake by write of that scripture, **before say** and **provide beforehand, that this true sense should come to mind of the reader or hearer**" (*Prologue*, pp. 44, 45).

"...**the same words** of scripture...may be proved by **other places** of holy scripture... [T]he author of scripture saith this sense in the same words which we would understand...and certainly the Spirit of God,

that wrought these things be the author of scripture...that this sense should come to the reader, either to the hearer, the Holy Ghost providing..." (*Prologue*, p. 45).

Understanding the Bible:



With Scriptures or Other Sources?

Wycliffe wrote a “book in which he showed that Holy Scripture contains all truth and, being from God, is the **only authority**” (Schaff-Herzog, s.v. Wyclif, p. 458). His book, *The Truth of Holy Scripture* (1378), affirms that “the scriptures are without error and contain God’s entire revelation. **No** further teaching from any **other source** is necessary...” (*The Indestructible Book*, p. 73).



Prologue: The introduction to the Wycliffe Bible repeats this theme, telling readers that spiritually helpful things found *outside* of scripture, are all found *in* scripture, in a purer and holier form.

“...what ever thing a man learneth without holy writ, if the thing learned is vain, it is damned in **holy writ; if it is profitable, it is found there**. And when a man find there all things which he learned profitably in other place, he shall find much **more plentifully** the thing in holy scriptures, which he learned never in other place, but be learned only **in the wonderful highness and in the wonderful meekness of holy scriptures...**” (*Prologue*, p. 49).

“He himself saw no need to embellish biblical quotation with extraneous material...” In one tract alone he used seven hundred scripture verses. Today, like-minded Christians who “preach the word,” preferring God’s words to their own, seem so “few, that a child may write them.” Wycliffe said the Bible teacher is “obliged to propagate the truth of Scripture, not historical events and worldly chronicles” (*Truth*, p. 191; Acts 16:6, 2 Tim. 4:2, Isa. 10:19).

He thought scripture had “a peculiar and incomparable eloquence all its own...” (Bobrick, p. 50). He believed “the sound of the word is the clothing of the word” (*Truth*, p. 141). Confirming the scarlet thread of **red** letters seen throughout this book and sounded out in the chapter “Sound = Sense,” the *Prologue* said,

“In the translation I follow the **letter** as much as I may...” (*Prologue*, p. 37).

Hebrew & Greek Grammars and Lexicons By Men

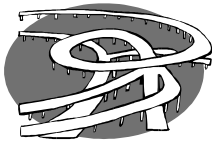
“...Holy Scripture is the word of the Lord and thus must be of the **highest authority**, writes Wycliffe” (*Truth*, p. 145). (Remember, Wycliffe’s definition of ‘Scripture’ includes the vernacular language editions, such as Old Latin and English.) Wycliffe wrote,

“I have often said that all the evil which was introduced into the human race stems from the erroneous perception of the sense of Scripture...Because the temptation of the first human being came about by means of Scripture... [‘Yea hath **God said**’].”

“[T]he devil...deceitfully corrupts it...” through men who subtly change its meaning and sense, he adds (*Truth*, p. 109). Wycliffe would abhor the current practice of correcting or defining scripture terms using man-made sources, instead

of the Bible’s own definitions. Wycliffe said those who “claim to have located” errors “in the text” do so because they follow “the definitions they have learned” in schools which teach “grammar” (*Truth*, p. 17).

“Inasmuch as all truth is **in Holy Scripture**, it **is** clear that every disputation, every **signification of terms**, or linguistic science which does not have its origin in Holy Scripture is profane...cursed, that is to say, unholy or sacrilegious. It is at a distance, as it were, from that which is consecrated...” (*Truth*, p. 112).



The significance of Greek and Hebrew terms given in **all** lexicons leads the searcher *off* the strait and narrow highway, around and down into dirty puddles dug out of the writings of the profane Greeks, like Aristotle and others. The innocent Christian who ends up in the back streets of *Strong’s Concordance Dictionary* was given no signpost, warning that the definitions lead back to —

- ✓ The **pagan** Greek (or philosopher’s) context from which all of these definitions were deduced (Aristotle, Dionysius, Epicurus, Sappho, Origen, Marcion, etc.; for an extensive list see *Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon*, pp. xvii-xx).
- ✓ The **unbeliever** who compiled the pagan citations then refashioned them in secondhand German or Latin (Kittel, Grimm, Gesenius, Friedrich, etc.).
- ✓ The **unbeliever** who further massaged the meaning when moving the German, Latin or Greek text into English (Thayer, Brown, Driver, & Briggs, Liddell & Scott, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker, Nida & Louw, G.W. Bromiley et al.).

- ✓ The **abridger**, who uses the words from these books, but does not reveal their pagan sources. For example:
 - ❑ **Strong** follows Gesenius; *Strong's Concordance*, "A Concise Dictionary of the Hebrew Words in the Bible," Preface.
 - ❑ **Vine** follows Grimm-Thayer et al.; see *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. xii.
 - ❑ **Zodhiates** follows critics Gesenius, Brown, Driver, Briggs & NIV editors; see *Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, p. 1593.
 - ❑ **Berry** follows Thayer; *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, "Introduction to New Testament Lexicon," pp. iii-vi.
 - ❑ **Green** follows Brown-Driver-Briggs et al.; see *The Interlinear Bible*, vol. 1, p. xiv. He follows Nazi, Rudolph Kittel, and Unitarian, Thayer; see *Sovereign Grace Publishers 2002 Catalogue*, p. 6 and Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, ch. 42.
 - ❑ **Kohlenberger**, Marshall, Mounce, Wuest, Vincent, Moulton, Milligan, Trench and other interlinear and dictionary *compilers* show ample evidence of the use of such corrupt sources.

Wycliffe warns against using the ideas of the profane Greeks to define scripture's words.

"This is why professors of Holy Scripture ought to imitate its manner of speaking, adhering to its eloquence and logic, more so than any foreign pagan writer...**some proof elicited from the declarations of Aristotle, or any other pagan, who remains a stranger to the light of our faith**...First, that whether they are explicating Scripture itself or **expressing** the appropriate **meaning** which rests beyond the text of Scripture, the interpreters of Holy Scripture should not imitate the aforementioned authors [i.e. Aristotle]..." (*Truth*, pp. 41, 42).

Wycliffe sounds a stern warning to those, who under the guise of teaching, proclaim —

‘The word here *actually* means...’

To those who would destroy the authority of the Bible with such statements, he states emphatically —

“I ask you, what could produce a greater deluge of distrust in the words of the Lord than saying that his words are impossible...while my words, though contrary to theirs, are unimpeachably true...As I said above, these are surely not the words of an expositor, but of a destroyer, not the words of a postillator, but those of one who does away with authority...[W]e should believe that **the Holy Spirit gave us the law of Scripture in the form which he wanted the church to observe**, one whose authority surpasses every created authority, since efficacy of its meaning is more useful, and the form of its words more venerable, than any foreign meaning or locution” (*Truth*, pp. 204-205).

Wycliffe charges, “[T]he person lying in this way about Holy Scripture sins gravely...”

“**Rather**, the person asserting such a meaning harms himself and others...[T]he grammarian...sins more by speaking...than a given layman...**For at least the layman pleases God by believing that it [his Bible] is true...**”(*Truth*, p. 230).

The profane Greeks and philosophers whose citations lie behind today's lexicons, "do not possess the Holy Spirit," writes Wycliffe. "[T]hese pseudo-prophets who **interpret the words** of Scripture in a manner other than the Holy Spirit intends...grudgingly recite a **meaning** which they are in fact scarcely able to defend" (*Truth*, pp. 231, 233, 232). Ask them, 'From what *source* did your reference book garner that definition?' Prompting the poem on p. 515, Wycliffe warns further:

“**W** hereupon, it appears that **our own** theologians walk into the lecture hall one day dressed as sheep with the purpose of commending the law of Scripture, and all of a sudden acquire the teeth of foxes, adding to this the tail of a viper...These fellows are just like foxes agreeing to peace with the roosters and chickens while standing at the door of their coop, though immediately upon entering they bare their teeth and turn ferocious...



I suppose that no **grammar** other than the ancient one they learned **outside of Scripture** would be acceptable to those **adversaries** who are extending the generous offer of **correcting Scripture**...I suppose, however, that throughout this entire process the adversary of the law will not admit any proposition or logical inference, unless it agrees **with his own grammar and those appendices he chooses to depend upon**... [such as Strong's, Marshall's, Berry's etc.]" (*Truth*, pp. 173, 174, 175).

Wycliffe believed, “[O]ne must learn a new grammar...when attempting to explicate [explain] or understand Holy Scripture...” “Wyclif insists that Scripture possesses a grammar all its own” —

“[T]he Lord teaches his own logic and grammar which remains hidden to unbelievers” (*Truth*, pp. 65, 13, 48).

One can only “explain under the authority of Scripture, those new senses of Scripture’s **terms**, which are **not** to be found in their **grammar books**.” Wycliffe wrote that “anyone who is unwilling to understand the grammar belonging to some part of Scripture, unless it conform to that which he learnt” from a textbook “will not only remain quite ignorant...but will end up entangling himself” in error. He feels,

“It is hardly the fault of Scripture if some ignorant fellow claims to have found an error...The slanderers should first learn Scripture’s own supremely correct grammar and logic, and study the sense of the author, before they engage in such defamation” (*Truth*, pp. 65, 47-48, 13).



Prologue: God himself will teach men the scriptures, so that they are not poisoned by “heathen men’s errors” hidden behind textbook covers.

“...**God** both **can** and may, if it liketh him, **speed simple men** out of the university, as much **to know holy writ**, as masters in the university; and therefore...never man of good will be poisoned with heathen men’s errors” (*Prologue*, p. 52).

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed...” Luke 9:26

Therefore Wycliffe said,

“Do not be ashamed, therefore of this evidence: Holy Scripture speaks in this way; therefore, I, as its humble disciple, should speak under its authority in a similar manner...even if it might appear **contrary to the human sciences...**

[T]he evangelical logician, having put aside worldly fame, would rather be considered a fool in the eyes of the world for Christ’s sake, in order that he might be counted wise before God” (*Truth*, p. 54).

He recommends the use of the Bible’s built-in dictionary to explain scripture terms.

“The Christian should speak the words of Scripture under the authority of Scripture, and according to that form which Scripture itself illustrates...**[U]se the words of scripture** in prayers...and **in the preaching and explication of Scripture**” (*Truth*, p. 69).

*A*greeing with the thesis of the book, *New Age Bible Versions* (that new bible words represent new ideas), Wycliffe encouraged the use of ‘holy’ terms (i.e. “only begotten Son,” not ‘one and only Son’; “end of the world,” not ‘end of the age’).

“Furthermore, it should be observed that when it came to drawing upon linguistic

novelties, the holy doctors of the early church quite reasonable forbid, in matters of faith, the introduction of new-fangled **terms** which are foreign to Scripture, for fear of the poison which could be **hidden in them by heretics**...And so it is with many of the terms invented by the masters these days. Yet danger still lurks within inventions of this kind, and the abuse of such inventions. The **safest** route, therefore, is to employ the **terms** and logic **of Scripture**” (*Truth*, p. 181).

Understanding the Bible:

Being Meek or Speaking Greek?



“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure” (Titus 1:15). Wycliffe points out that those who see impurity in the scriptures are ‘projecting’ a view of their own **sin torn heart**.

“[I]f anything **true** sounds wrong, the reason for this **rests with the person** who is listening to it...Nothing evil, therefore, is found in truth of this sort, but rather **in the person**...culpably turning it into an opportunity for sin...” (*Truth*, pp. 177-178).

To those who correct the scriptures, Wycliffe warns,

“[W]e should not put ourselves on a par with the authors of Holy Scripture while explaining their obscure language...” (*Truth*, p. 43).

Such ‘correctors of the scriptures’ “claim to be their equals in authority.” They are “at the same time revealing the arrogance” of their hearts. Wycliffe advises a “humble acceptance of the authority of Scripture” (*Truth*, pp. 43, 55, 145).



Prologue: The seed of God’s word and its fruit of the Spirit — “Meekness” and “love” — are inseparable (Gal. 5:22-23). Bible understanding (and its built-in dictionary) remain hidden to the proud, according to the *Prologue*.

“...for almost no thing is seen in the darkness, which thing is not found said full plenty in other places...[E]ach place of holy writ, both open and dark, teacheth meekness and charity...**Pride** and covetousness...is cause of...blindness and heresy, and **preventeth** him from very **understanding**...” (*Prologue*, pp. 50, 2).

“Also he whose heart is full of charity comprehendeth, without any error...[H]e that holdeth charity in virtue...holdeth both that is open and that that is hid in God’s word...Also if her **study** is done **with meekness**, and love of Christian lore, it is of God... [H]oly scripture spake darkly, that the privacies thereof be hid from unfaithful men, and good men be exercised either occupied, and that in expounding holy scripture, they have a **new grace** diverse from the first authors” (*Prologue*, pp. 45, 48, 49).

“...holy life is a lantern to bring a man to very cunning, as Chrysostom saith, and the dread and love of God is the beginning and

perfection of cunning and wisdom...As long as pride and covetousness of worldly goods and honors is rooted in her heart...wisdom shall not enter into an evil willed soul...

How by good life men cometh to understanding of scripture and Jesus Christ saith, that the Father of heaven hideth the privacies of holy scripture from wise men and prudent...and showeth them meek men...[F]orsake pride and covetousness, and **be ye meek** and **dread ye God** in all things, and **love** him over all other things, and **your neighbor** as yourself; and **then ye shall profit in study of holy writ...**” (*Prologue*, p. 51).



Prologue: The Wycliffe Bible reminds its reader,

“[B]eware of pride, and vain janglings and chiding in words against proud clerks of school and vain religions, and **answer ye meekly** and prudently to enemies of God’s law, and pray ye heartily for him, that God of his great mercy give to him very knowing of scriptures...” (*Prologue*, p. 49).

The following pages document three **TRUTHS**, seldom recognized about the Bible during the 1300s and 1400s.

- ✓ Wycliffe *did not* write the first English Scriptures.
- ✓ Earlier Christians had the scriptures and could read.
- ✓ Wycliffe *did not* use the *corrupt* Latin Vulgate.



Wycliffe Wrote the First English Scriptures

The myth, that the English people had only scraps of scriptures before Wycliffe, is perpetuated to degrade God’s promise of “the word which he commanded to a thousand generations” and “to all nations” (1 Chron. 16:15, Romans 16:26). When the impression is given that the common man has no preserved and infallible scriptures, the position and authority of the word of God can more easily be pirated by “Popish Persons” and “self conceited Brethren, who...give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil” (“The Epistle Dedicatory,” King James Bible).

Such persons harness the word of God to the names of men — Wycliffe, Tyndale, King James and others. It *is* and has always been ‘The Holy Bible.’ Oxford scholar, Christopher De Hamel said there was a “medieval passion for dogmatically linking texts with the name of famous authors” (Christopher De Hamel, *A Book. A History of the Bible*, New York: Phaidon, 2001, p. 170).

Wycliffe did not need to go up to Mt. Sinai to receive a *new* revelation from the Holy Ghost. The English scriptures had been passed down through the hands and hearts of faithful men. He and his associates merely ‘polished’ the spelling and idiom and Anglicized the word order of the scriptures already existing in his time (i.e. Bede, Alfred, Athelstane, Richard Rolle et al.). In the last half of the 1300s, others, like John de Trevisa, produced an English edition of “**the entire Bible**,” through the patronage of Lord Thomas de Berkeley. This patron loved the scriptures so much that he had “the whole book of Revelation...written upon the walls and ceiling of his chapel at Berkeley, where it was to be seen hundreds of years after” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, Litchfield, Michigan: Maranatha Bible Society, hardback edition, 1858 facsimile, p. 17).

The Cambridge History of the Bible identifies numerous manuscripts of the “**Gospels**” and “**epistles**, and of **Acts**” which existed *before* Wycliffe in the last half of the 1300s (vol. 2, pp. 389-390 et al.). Hasting’s *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* directs readers to numerous books documenting evidence of such early English scriptures:

- A.C. Paues, *Fourteenth-Century English Version*, Cambridge, 1902.
- M. Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible and other Medieval Biblical Versions*, Cambridge, 1920.
- *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Cambridge, 1908-16, ii. 43-48.
- *The Pauline Epistles contained in MS Parker 32* (E.E.T.S.), London, 1917 (James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XII, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1928, s.v. Wyclif, p. 821, n. 1, 2).

Actually *seeing* many pre-Wycliffe English scriptures during his twenty-five year tenure as Curator of Medieval and Illuminated Manuscripts at Sotheby’s in London, Christopher De Hamel (Ph.D. Oxford) says, of the *earliest extant Wycliffe Bible* (MS Bodley 959),



“[I]t was **copied** (hastily, no doubt) from a text **already in English**. Therefore they were not translating but transcribing” (De Hamel, p. 171).

The scholar’s *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910-1911 concurs, saying of the Wycliffe Bible:



“...**already existing versions**, with changes when necessary, were incorporated and made use of by the translators” (s.v. Bible, English, p. 897).

While teaching at Oxford, during his 35 year tenure there, Wycliffe spent two years lecturing on the Old and New Testaments “one chapter at a time” (Bobrick, p. 27). He then wrote a *Commentary on the Gospels*. It included a text of the Gospels *already in existence*. He used this already existing text of the Gospels, both in his *Commentary* and in his Wycliffe Bible.



“The text of the Gospels was extracted from the Commentary upon them by Wycliffe...” (EB, s.v. Bible, English, p. 896).

Wycliffe’s Epistles, Acts and Revelation were “polished” versions of already existing texts. *The Encyclopedia* notes that “passages from the Early Wycliffe Version (1380-1384), from both the Old Testament and the New Testament, are actually quoted in the Commentary...” (s.v. Bible, English, p. 896).

There is no doubt that Wycliffe was involved with ‘polishing’ the English Bible, for the Catholic hierarchy and their deadly *Constitutions of Oxford*, specifically named Wycliffe in their mandate forbidding Bibles. One such statement said,

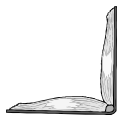


“We therefore command and ordain that henceforth no one translate on his own authority any text of Holy Scripture into English...and that no one read anything of this kind lately made in the time of the said John Wycliffe...” (Bobrick, p. 68; *Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 393-394).

Because of such ordinances, many Bible owners “erased his name from their pages out of fear” (Bobrick, p. 69). Dates on Bibles were omitted or removed because it was illegal to have a Bible with Wycliffe’s name on it or one written with

a date that might imply Wycliffe's involvement. His earliest editions are given dates between 1380 and 1384; the later editions are given dates between 1388 and 1395. These, however, may not be entirely accurate. Wycliffe's Bible evolved between 1380 and 1395. Some writers have tried to assign the changes to two separate 'events,' but actual examination of the 200 or so extant editions makes it evident that polishing was progressive, with mixed texts seen in numerous editions. This somewhat thwarts the theory that John Purvey, Wycliffe's secretary, did the entire second edition on his own after Wycliffe's death (see De Hamel or *The Cambridge History of the Bible*).

'Articles,' were collected against Purvey, because, like Wycliffe, he would not obey the pope, whom he called "Antichrist, or any of his shavelings." Such priests he called, "...heretics, blasphemers, and seducers of Christian people...Satan's own stewards." Purvey said that the Catholic practice of "...auricular confession, or private penance, is a certain whispering, destroying the liberty of the gospel, and newly brought in by the pope and the clergy, to entangle the consciences of men in sin, and draw their souls into hell." For such outspoken views and for their work on the Wycliffe Bible, both Purvey and Nicholas Hereford, editor of part of the Old Testament, were imprisoned and tortured (Fexe, vol. 3, pp. 287, 286, 289).



"This John Purvey, with Herford, a doctor of divinity, were grievously tormented and punished in the prison..." (Fexe, vol. 3, p. 285).

A prison (called Lollard's Prison in Lambeth Palace in London) was built to detain Christians. It can still be seen today with the prisoner's iron rings next to writing on the wall which reads, "*Jesus amor meus* (Jesus is my love)" (*The Indestructible Book*, p. 80). Purvey and Hereford were

joined there by the ‘street preachers’ of the day. In 1382, a statute which forbade preaching, was directed at Wycliffe and other Christians. It read in part,



“[T]here be divers evil persons within the realm, going from county to county, and from town to town...under dissimulation of great holiness...preaching daily in churches and churchyards, but also in markets, fairs, and other open places where a great congregation of people is...[A]rrest all such preachers...[H]old them in strong prison” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 36).

What had they been preaching — the word of God from pre-Wycliffe scriptures.



Myth 2

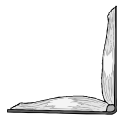
Few people had scriptures or could read.

If mythmakers can convince us that generation upon generation of men and women went to their graves without reading or hearing the word of God, they can implant the false impression that we do not *need* scriptures (but need Catholic sacraments, ecstatic experiences, or myth-makers). Their imaginary world, without the word, impugns God. For if man *does* need scriptures, God would be lax in not offering them.

Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (A.D. 1563) traces Christianity from the first century to the 1500s. A thorough reading of *all eight* of its large volumes makes it abundantly clear that all who wanted scriptures, had them, in hand or in heart, as much or as little as they wanted. “In his lengthy book, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), [Sir Thomas] More

asserted that Bibles in the **English** language were **not at all rare.**” It was “furtively copied for simple God-fearing labourers who used it in secret.” “Quite often, a Wycliffite Bible must have been almost the only book in an owner’s household” (De Hamel, pp. 168, 187). A contemporary of Wycliffe in the 1300s claimed “every second man” he met was a true Christian, then called Lollard (Bobrick, p. 68). “Wycliffe Bibles were **widely** used by noblemen, clergy, and — most significantly — **common people**” (*The Bible Through the Ages*, editor, Robert V. Huber, Pleasantville, NY: Reader’s Digest, 1996, p. 287).

Although many of the 200 surviving manuscripts of the Wycliffe Bible were beautifully ornamented with letterings and bindings, *The Cambridge History of the Bible* records that during Wycliffe’s time and following, there were **many** small New Testaments, in “a plain, even rough, hand with no decoration of any kind.”



“[S]maller and cheaper copies were intended for common use among the lower classes. Reading them together in small groups, as the evidence at trials shows that they did, they were in danger of prosecution and even death, but read them they did, and the small and secret Bible-readings and meetings that they conducted proved a fertile breeding-ground for that Puritanism or non-conformity that has never since died out” (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 389, 414).

An English law, which was enforced for over 125 years, called for “extreme thoroughness in searching out and burning” all books and Bibles associated with Wycliffe. This leaves us with just a token of the copies then in use.

Many Christians were “burned at the stake in London in 1496 with their manuscripts [hand written Bibles] tied around their necks.” Foxe describes many others martyred for possessing “a little book of Scripture in **English**” (De Hamel, pp. 187, 189, 186, 187).

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” Rom. 5:20

Memorize

The Bible needs no paper; it is spirit and truth, “which must always exist, whether in the manuscript or in the mind,” said Wycliffe. Men in the ministry had “whole books, committed to memory” (*Truth*, pp. 158, 31). Many others memorized whole books, like Alice Collins and her daughter Joan (of Burford), who recited the entire book of James and Peter at meetings (Bobrick, p. 74). Because Christians knew scripture, they were called ‘known men’ and ‘known women’ (*Eadie*, vol. 1, 1876, pp. 94, 95).

Those who were
“known” by Christ
would ‘know scriptvire’
in A.D. 1383
when ‘u’ was ‘v’
(before tv.)



There is no compelling current need in our English culture to burn Bibles, or bind to the stake those “living epistles” who have memorized scripture. The adversary simply burns a few more CDs, DVDs or NIVs to inflame and entangle the souls of men.

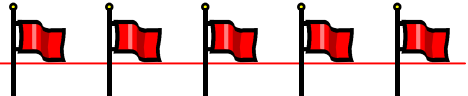
Why were Bibles burned? The Wycliffe Bible and its *Prologue* exposed too many *enemy secrets*.

“For the next 125 years, it was illegal to make or own any Wycliffite Bible in England” (De Hamel, p. 166). **Why?**

Oxford professor of Historical Theology, Alister McGrath said,

“As Wycliffe pointed out, the ecclesiastical establishment had a considerable vested interest in not allowing the laity access to the Bible. They might even discover that there was a massive discrepancy between the **lifestyles** of bishops and clergy and those commended – and practiced – by Christ and the apostles” (Alister E. McGrath, *In the Beginning*, New York: Doubleday, 2001, p. 19).

Sodomy



Wycliffe’s Bibles were really “suppressed only because...their polemical notes” exposed wrongs in the Catholic church (Bobrick, p. 56). The loose lifestyles of some priests and monks at Oxford offended Wycliffe. The *Prologue* to the Wycliffe Bible took an entire page to expose the sodomy of the priests at Oxford.

“...drinking blood, either birling [drawing out, OED] blood. (Note: Warn Oxford of sodomy, with other sins!) Lord! [W]hether Oxford drink blood and birlith blood, by slaying of live men, and by doing of sodomy, in losing a part of man’s blood

whereby a child might be formed, doom [or deem] they that know; and where Oxford drink blood of sin, and stirith other men of the land to do sin...The first great sin is generally in the university...

[T]he second horrible sin is sodomy and strong maintenance thereof, as it is known to many persons of the realm, and at the last parliament. Alas! divines, that should pass other men in cleanness and holiness, as angels of heaven pass frail men in virtues, be most slandered of this cursed sin...bodily sodomy..." (*Prologue*, p. 51).

Wycliffe "tried to protect undergraduates from their snares" (Bobrick, p. 26). "He had an eager hatred of what was wicked," wrote G.M. Trevelyan in 1899 in his book *England in the Age of Wycliffe*.

"Passions were especially aroused by their attempt to take advantage of the younger students – some as young as twelve – whose matriculation at Oxford often took them far from home.

One official university pronouncement charged the friars with luring children 'by apples and drinks' into their establishments where they were indoctrinated with the order's teaching and kept from contact with family and friends...

[I]t brought the university into discredit with parents, who had entrusted their children to its school" (Bobrick, pp. 27, 26).

Priests, monks, and nuns

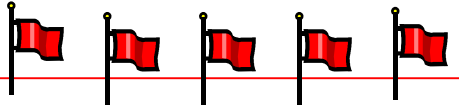


The Prologue to the Wycliffe Bible charged many priests with being, “vicious priests, proud, covetous, ravenous, wrathful, hypocrites, treacherous, gluttonous, lecherous, envious, and backbiters; and ye transfigure Satan into an angel of light” (*Prologue*, p. 33). Wycliffe warned that “many priests...defile wives, maidens, widows, and nuns in every manner of lechery...” Wycliffe said further that “Privy confession made to priests...is not needful, but brought in late by the Fiend...” He described some monasteries as, “dens of thieves, nests of serpents, houses of living devils” (John Wycliffe, *English Works*, “Of Prelates,” “On the Pope” et al., F. D. Matthew, editor, London, 1880, pp. 100, 330-331, 477).

Such forthright words brought Wycliffe to trial before the religious leaders of his day. Wycliffe said, “For many have been instructed, God knows how and by whom, that it would be a work of charity to kill me...” (*Truth*, p. 197). On numerous occasions Wycliffe was spared from harm by the hand of God.

“...a great number of religious men and doctors were gathered together in a certain church to dispute against Wycliff, suddenly, the door of the church was broken open with lightning, in such sort, that his enemies hardly escaped without hurt.”

“...a great company of babbling friars and religious persons were gathered together to consult as touching John Wycliff’s books ...[T]he very hour and instant that they should go forward with their business, a wonderful and terrible earthquake fell throughout all England” (Foxye, vol. 3, p. 23).



Wycliffe's book, "*De officio regis* is practically a declaration of war against the papal monarchy..." (*EB*, s.v. Wycliffe, p. 869). His books contain a "mass of attacks upon the papacy...[A]t the last, pope and Antichrist seem to him practically equivalent conceptions" (Schaff-Herzog, s.v. Wyclif, p. 459). Wycliffe said,

"Christ was meek...[T]he pope sits on his throne and makes lords to kiss his feet" (Wycliffe, *De officio pastorali*, in *English Works*, p. 457).

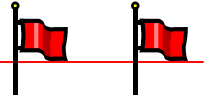
He described popes as "the damned limbs of Lucifer" (*The Horizon History of Christianity*, p. 238). Wycliffe's views are even echoed by Catholic poet Francesco Petrarch, who describes the Vatican as:

"...a receptacle of all that is most wicked and abominable. What I tell you is not from hearsay, but from my own knowledge and experience. In this city there is no piety, no reverence or fear of God, no faith or charity, nothing that is holy, just, equitable, or humane" (Bobrick, p. 34).

In 1382 Wycliffe wrote to Pope Urban VI:

"I would surely present myself before the bishop of Rome; but the Lord hath otherwise visited me to the contrary, and hath taught me rather to obey God than men" (Foxe, vol. 3, pp. 49-50).

Mass and **T**ransubstantiation



Wycliffe called the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation -

- “heathenish”
- “novel”
- “blasphemous folly”
- “deceit” which “despoils the people and leads them to commit idolatry”

(Schaff-Herzog, s.v. Wyclif, p. 465; John Wycliffe, *Triologus*, iv, cap. 22; *De Euch.* p. 249, as cited in *EB*, s.v. Wycliffe, p. 869).

The *Prologue* to the Wycliffe Bible said that the phrase —

“eat the flesh of man’s son, and should drink his blood...is figurative speech, commanding us...to have in mind, that his flesh was wounded and crucified for us...”

It said further,

“What honour of God is this to kneel and offer to an image, made of sinful man’s hands, and to despise and rob the image made of God’s hands, that is, a Christian man, either a Christian woman...” (*Prologue*, pp. 44, 34).

Apocrypha



Some point to the inclusion of Apocryphal Old Testament books in Bibles of this period. All pure Bibles viewed these books as non-canonical and said so in their preface.

The Wycliffe Bible warned in its *Prologue* that only those books written in Hebrew were canonical. Others, it said,

“...shall be set among Apocrypha, that is, without authority of belief...[that] be not of the authority of bible ancient Hebrew...

[R]eceiveveth not them among holy Scripture...that be not ancient Hebrew and be not of the number of holy writ;

[They] aught to be cast far away...for me doubteth the truth thereof” (*Prologue*, pp. 1, 2).

Wycliffe said that when the “Word of God is not heard, spiritual death broods over all” (Schaff-Herzog, s.v. Wyclif, pp. 464, 466).

“[H]e designated the Bible as the one authority for believers, and so teachings, traditions, bulls, symbols, and censures go by the board as far as they do not rest on Scripture.”

Upcoming documentation will show that Tyndale and Coverdale did not approve of the Apocrypha. King James, himself did not approve of it (See Chapter 16).

Wycliffe vs Rome

Numerous ‘Articles’ were compiled by Wycliffe’s enemies to summarize his beliefs, “not as he hath uttered them, but as his froward adversaries have compiled and collected them out of his writings” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 64). Foxe said they express Wycliffe’s Biblical views, but are not his precise words:

- “The church of Rome is the synagogue of Satan;...[F]rom the pope to the lowest novices, they be altogether heretics.”
- “There be twelve disciples of Antichrist: popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, arch-deacons, officials, deans, monks, canons, friars and pardoners.”
- “Graduations and doctorships in universities and colleges as they be used, conduce nothing to the church.” He said the Bible was “open to the understanding of simple men” (*Prologue*, p. 2).
- “He that is the more humble and more serviceable to the church, and more enamoured with the love of Christ, is...the greater...”
- “Such as found and build monasteries, do offend and sin, and all such as enter into the same, be members of the devil.”
- “That religious men, being in their private religions, are not of the Christian religion.”
- “That it is not found or established by the gospel, that Christ did make or ordain mass.”
- “That Christ is not in the sacrament of the altar...”
- “[T]he bread is figuratively the body of Christ, and not naturally. And, without all doubt, this is a figurative speech, to say, ‘This is my body.’”
- “That if a man be duly and truly contrite and penitent, all exterior and outward confession is but superfluous and unprofitable unto him.” (Foxe, vol. 3, pp. 21, 22, 62, 63).



MYTH 3

Wycliffe Used a Corrupt Latin Vulgate

The verse comparison charts in this book dispel the myth that Wycliffe and his followers used a corrupt Bible translated from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate.

The myth that Wycliffe had no access to the original languages is discounted by Wycliffe himself who said that he had access to **Hebrew** Old Testament manuscripts which were in “complete agreement” with the Old Latin text he followed. He adds,

“[T]he Jews were dispersed among the nations, taking with them their Hebrew manuscripts. Now this happened...that we might have recourse to their manuscripts as witnesses to the fact that there is no difference in the sense found in our Latin books and those Hebrew ones” (*Truth*, p. 157).

He also makes reference to manuscripts being “corrected according to the **Greek** exemplar.” Once Jerome’s text was *corrected*, there was “complete agreement of his translation [Wycliffe’s] with the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts” (*Truth*, pp. 143, 157 et al.).

Like the KJV translators, Wycliffe began his work with the foundation of preserved English scriptures. Like them, he polished it, making reference to the aforementioned manuscripts and an accessible and accurate Bible from another language group. In his case, it was the *first* century “vulgar Latin” scriptures, called the Old Latin, first heard in Acts 2. He did *not* translate directly from an uncorrected copy of Jerome’s *fourth* century Latin revision, the official Catholic ‘Latin Vulgate.’ The myth that the Wycliffe Bible

came from this ‘Latin Vulgate’ arose from the misleading statement — “made from the Latin Vulgate” — *added* to the frontice page of an 1850 printed edition of Wycliffe’s Bible, edited by Frederic Madden and Josiah Forshall. The *Cambridge History of the Bible* questions whether their text gives an “accurate impression” of all Wycliffe Bibles, since Purvey may have edited the text (vol. 2, pp. 395-407).

The *true* original *Prologue* to the ‘Wycliffe Bible’ warns of such corrupt Latin bibles, which themselves needed correction and were not used by true Christians.

“...he shall find full many bibles in **Latin** full **false**, if he look many, namely new; and the common **Latin bible** has **more need to be corrected**, as many as I have seen in my life, **than the English bible late translated...**” (*Prologue*, p. 58).

Therefore Wycliffe and his associates relied, not on the Latin as a final authority, but on copies of it, corrected by the Greek, Hebrew, and English. *The Prologue* adds,

“...[T]he church readeth **not** the Psalms by the last translation of **Jerome** out of Hebrew into Latin, but another translation of other men...”

The *Prologue* says further that in “few” places, good Bibles read as the “originals of Jerome.”

“Jerome was not so holy as the apostles and evangelists...neither he had so high gifts of the Holy Ghost as they had; and much more the LXX translators were not so holy as Moses and the prophets...[There were]

heretics, that did away many mysteries of Jesus Christ by **guileful [lying] translation...**” (*Prologue*, p. 58).

Wycliffe wrote that he was not alone in his distrust of some readings in Jerome’s translation, particularly the later ‘editions’ of it.

“[O]ne need not believe that Jerome is free from error, since many other interpreters disagree with him. Indeed, in his own time he was reproached by Augustine and his other rivals...[G]iven the corruption of the modern texts we have not certified that the books which we do have were duly emended. In light of this, when it comes to those uncorrected modern manuscripts, I say that the defect can arise from sin on the [Catholic] Church’s part” (*Truth*, pp. 156, 158).

In 1837 researcher George Townsend documented a 1380 Bible, whose New Testament title page reads as follows:

“The New Testament, with the Lessons taken out of the Old Law, read in churches according to the use of Sarum: translated into English from the **vulgar Latin**, by John **Wycliffe**, D.D. Rector of Lutterworth 1380” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 64, n. 2).

Notice that it does not say from the ‘Latin Vulgate,’ but from the “vulgar Latin” — those Old Latin scriptures brought to England in the first century from the east, perhaps from Jerusalem, Galilee, Judea, Antioch, or Rome (Bruce Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 288). Smyth’s *How We Got Our Bible* admits that Wycliffe used “older Latin versions” than the “Vulgate” (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1886, p. 98).

“We know, from historical evidence, that the Scriptures were read in Britain in a form considerably different from the form which the Church of Rome sought to impose upon the whole of Christendom. This **older text** came into **Britain** with the Roman legions and lingered on from the time of the Roman occupation until the days of the Venerable Bede who died in 735. The Latin Vulgate is of inferior interest to English speaking people, for it represents an Italian revision of the scriptures that only faintly resembles the early texts which were brought to Britain” (*McClure*, R.E. Publications, p. 3).

The pure Latin scripture seeds, sown in the first century in the hearts of Irish and Scottish Christians, took root and produced fruit which remained through the 1300s.

“Besides, it is highly probable that the older type of doctrine and practice represented by the Iro-Scottish Christians of the pre-Roman [Catholic A.D. 597] time persisted till the time of Wyclif and reappeared in Lollardism” (*Schaff-Herzog*, s.v. Wyclif, p. 455).

Today’s museums house over 100 Old Latin manuscripts, testifying to the readings seen in the KJV. These include: 46 for the Gospels, 19 for Acts, 20 for Paul’s writings, 12 of the Epistles, and 7 for the book of Revelation. Witnesses to the Old Latin include early manuscripts such as the Irish Codex Harleianus (MS 1023 of the British Museum), Codex Veronensis (4th century), Codex Corbeiensis (4th century), The Book of Armagh (MS 1802 in the British Museum), Codex Laudianus, and Codex Bezae, which is cited in some of the charts in this book (*Metzger*, *Early Versions*, p. 294; Thousands more Old Latin MS may be hidden in Rome’s cloistered Beron Institute, home of 10,000 Latin manuscripts.)

Jesus Christ & Wycliffe, the Christian

In Wycliffe's writings,

“Above all was emphasized the incomparable exaltation of Jesus Christ as the one mediator between God and man.”

Wycliffe wrote of “Christ...the one Fountain of salvation” (*Schaff-Herzog*, s.v. Wyclif, p. 464).

William Thorpe, writing in 1407 of Wycliffe's trial, said he “was of unblemished walk in life...” Even his enemies admitted he was a “perfect liver” (Bobrick, p. 30). “[W]ith all good men he was highly favored” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 64).

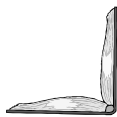
Those “most intimately acquainted with Wycliffe's work” note the “deep influence of personal holiness and the attractive greatness of his moral character” (*Schaff-Herzog*, s.v. Wyclif, pp. 461-462). Oxford University wrote a glowing “Public Testimony” about Wycliffe saying,



“Wherefore we signify unto you by these presents, that his conversation, even from his youth upward, unto the time of his death, was so praiseworthy and honest, that never at any time was there any note of spot or suspicion reported of him. But, in his answering, reading, preaching, and determining, he behaved himself laudably, and as a stout and valiant champion of the faith; vanquishing by the force of the Scriptures, all those, who by their wilful beggary, blasphemed and slandered Christ's religion” (Fuxe, vol. 3, p. 58).

Wycliffe's Books Misrepresented and His Bones Mutilated

To Wycliffe's writings were deviously added, "expressions falsely reported, to suit the malicious intensions of his enemies..." (Fuxe, vol. 3, p. 64, note 2). Fuxe's warning about slandering scribes needs to be repeated today:



"Forasmuch as it is, and always hath been, the common guise and practice of the pope's church, to extinguish, condemn, and abolish all good books and wholesome treatises of learned men, under a false pretense of errors and heresies...these catholic clergymen, in mistaking, falsifying, depraving, blaspheming, and slandering, where they have no cause, against all right and honest dealing, yea, against...verity of God's word...First, what opinions and articles these men gather out of their books for errors and heresies...they wrest, pervert, and misconstrue their sayings and writings in such sense as the writers never spake nor meant; and all, to bring them into hatred of the world, after they have burned their books. So they did with John Wycliffe, John Huss...Tyndale...yet do still with all the protestants, either **perverting their sayings** otherwise than they meant...untruly mistaking them, either in mangling the places, or **adding to their words**, as may serve for their most advantage, to bring them out of credit with princes and all the people" (Fuxe, vol. 5, p. 569; see also vol. 2, p. 790 et al.).

For example, purported Wycliffe quotes, such as “God must obey the devil,” were twisted from Wycliffe’s comment that “By his obedience to Pilate, Christ has shown that even tyrants must be obeyed.” A second example recalls:



“[A] spurious fanatical tract, probably the work of some...Franciscan attributed by its editor, J.H. Todd, to Wyclif...This work deceived many and did not conduce to a higher estimate of the Reformer” (Hastings, p. 819, note 13, p. 823).

Available today is the highly distorted and abridged English translation of Wycliffe’s *On the Truth of Holy Scriptures*, translated by Ian Levy, under a Catholic dominated ‘Advisory Board’ lead by Jesuit priest, John P. Donnelly S.J. and John C. Cavadini of the Catholic University of Notre Dame. The Latin translator’s expression, ‘The translator is the traitor,’ truly fits Levy’s translation, which *misrepresents* Wycliffe’s words on page after page. It omits entirely some 800 pages of the original which defy distortion. Only those snippets of Levy’s translation which are entirely accurate are cited in this chapter (*Truth*, front material and p. x, et al.).

Not content with mutilating Wycliffe’s words, the priests whom he had scolded, set forth a decree, years after his death, that his body should be exhumed from the grave and cast into the *river* Swift.

“This synod also decreeth and ordaineth, that the body and bones of the said John Wicliff...should be taken out of the ground, and thrown away...” — burned, then cast into the *river* (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 94).

God had other plans —

Wycliffe's Bones

EZEK. 37:10

They cannot slow that river's flow,
nor scripture seeds that God has sown.
The bones that followed every bend
of river 'til they met its end,
went out to sea, whose waters fed
unnumbered seeds, which God did send
to reach the sands of every land.
“[T]hey lived and stood...upon their feet.”
Such lively words our hearts do meet.
Their lyrics echo true today,
‘strait is the gate, and
narrow is the
way.’

Other phrases such as “the deep things of God,” “whited
sepulchres,” and “Who is this King of glory?”
have sounded for over seven hundred years
in English ears. Such a Bible was
used for over 140 years until
Tyndale and Coverdale
saw the opening
of the petals
of the prize
English
Rose.



SONG OF SOL. 2:1



Exhumation of John Wycliffe's bones by Roman Catholic priests
Taken from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*

Although “the bud is perfect,” it shall “blossom as the rose” (Isa. 18:5, 35:1). William Thorpe, imprisoned in 1407 for his faith, said of the martyr’s smoke,

“[T]his heavenly smell of God’s word, will not as a smoke pass away with the wind; but it will descend and rest in some clean soul, that thirsteth there after” (Foxe, vol. 3, p. 250).

One of the hundreds who were martyred in the next two centuries reported,

“[W]here Wycliffe’s bones were burnt, sprang up a well or well-spring” (Foxe, vol. 5, p. 34).

